

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 PARIS 32746 01 OF 02 091404Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----019440 091410Z /47

P 091353Z NOV 77

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1438

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 32746

EXDIS
NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: FR, AL, MO

SUBJECT: ELYSEE WEIGHS MILITARY ACTIONS AGAINST
POLISARIO IN MAURITANIA

SUMMARY: ELYSEE SOURCE TELLS US IN STRICT CONFIDENCE
THAT GISCARD MAY AUTHORIZE MILITARY STRIKE MEASURES
AGAINST POLISARIO MOVEMENTS IN MAURITANIA WHICH
APPEAR TO THREATEN THE SECURITY OF THE FRENCH COLONY
THERE. END SUMMARY.

L. ELYSEE INTERNATIONAL STAFF SOURCE (PROTECT
THROUGHOUT) ON AFTERNOON NOVEMBER 7 GAVE EMBOFF
BLEAK ACCOUNT OF RESULTS OF AMBASSADOR CHAYET'S
MISSION TO ALGIERS. ALTHOUGH CHAYET HAD NOT YET
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 PARIS 32746 01 OF 02 091404Z

MADE HIS FORMAL REPORT TO GISCARD, ELYSEE HAD IMPRESSION
THAT BOUMEDIENNE HAD CLEARLY STONEWALLED GISCARD'S
INCREASINGLY URGENT DEMANDS THAT HE ASSUME RESPON-
SIBILITY FOR THE POLISARIO'S KIDNAPPINGS OF FRENCH
CITIZENS NOW BEING HELD BY THEM ON ALGERIAN TERRITORY.
ALGERIANS REPLIED THAT THEY HAD NOT DIRECTLY CONDONED
THESE ACTIONS, BUT TOOK REFUGE IN CLAIMS THAT THERE

WAS LITTLE THEY COULD DO. LIBYAN FOREIGN MINISTER
JALOUH HAD, IN HIS PARIS TALKS, BEEN SIMILARLY
ELUSIVE.

2. GISCARD, SOURCE SAID, WOULD CONTINUE TO PURSUE
ALL POSSIBLE DIPLOMATIC AVENUES TO LIBERATE THE FRENCH
HOSTAGES. THIS COULD INCLUDE FURTHER WARNINGS, A
RENEWAL OF THE CHAYET MISSION, OR RENEWED EFFORTS
THROUGH THIRD PARTIES, AND THE INTERNATIONAL RED
CROSS. (IN THIS CONNECTION, WE NOTE THAT GISCARD
HAS JUST MADE A SOLEMN APPEAL FOR THE HELP OF INTER-
NATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS). HOWEVER, THE
ELYSEE RECOGNIZED THAT GISCARD'S OPTIONS WERE NOW
"VERY NARROW" AND THAT IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE TO
AVOID FOR MUCH LONGER TAKING A MORE DIRECT
APPROACH.

3. IN CONSIDERING THESE OPTIONS, ELYSEE SOURCE
CONFIRMED THAT THE TECHNICAL PROBLEM FACING GOF IN
CONSIDERING A DIRECT RESCUE, HOWEVER, WAS "DEVILISH".
THE ELYSEE NOW HAS SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE AS TO THE
WHEREABOUTS OF THE KIDNAPPED CITIZENS, WHO ARE BEING
HELD SEPARATELY IN INDIVIDUALLY GUARDED PLACES IN
ONE GENERAL AREA IN ALGERIAN TERRITORY. SINCE IT WAS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 PARIS 32746 01 OF 02 091404Z

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 PARIS 32746 02 OF 02 091403Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----019437 091411Z /47

P 091353Z NOV 77

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1439

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY
USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAKAR PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 32746

EXDIS

NOT LIKELY, IN SUCH A SETTING, THAT A MILITARY INTERVENTION COULD SUCCEED BEFORE THE CAPTORS HAD HAD TIME TO KILL THE HOSTAGES, AND SINCE SUCH AN OPERATION WOULD HAVE TO TAKE PLACE ON ALGERIAN TERRITORY, GISCARD HAS DEFINITELY EXCLUDED A MILITARY RESCUE OPERATION.

4. AN EARLY LIBERATION OF THE HOSTAGES, THE ELYSEE SOURCE CONTINUED, IS, THEREFORE, NOT LIKELY. ON THE OTHER HAND, BOTH HUMANITARIAN AND DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS WILL MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR GISCARD TO REMAIN INACTIVE, SINCE THE IMAGE OF A FEEBLE PRESIDENCY COULD BE VERY DAMAGING TO HIM ELECTORALLY. MILITARY PREPARATIONS HAVE, THEREFORE, BEEN MADE AND ARE NOW IN PLACE IN MAURITANIA FOR AN ACTIVE DEFENSE OF THE FRENCH COLONY WORKING
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 PARIS 32746 02 OF 02 091403Z

THERE. SOURCE STRESSED THAT GISCARD HAD NOT REPEAT NOT YET OPTED TO USE THIS FORCE. IF, AS SOURCE EXPECTS, HE DOES SO, THE FRENCH WOULD UNDERTAKE HARD MILITARY STRIKES AT POLISARIO COLUMNS ENTERING THE GENERAL AREA OF MAURITANIA WHERE THE FRENCH ARE WORKING, RATHER THAN MERELY "PROTECTING" THEM IN A NARROW, LOCAL SENSE. WHILE THE MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT HAS OF COURSE BEEN CONSULTED IN PRINCIPLE AND FULLY AGREES, THE MOROCCANS HAVE SO FAR DECLINED TO PROMISE ANY DIRECT COOPERATION WITH SUCH FRENCH OPERATIONS IN MAURITANIAN SOIL.

5. THE ELYSEE IS AWARE OF THE "TERRIBLE DIPLOMATIC COST" FOR FRANCE, AS SOURCE PUT IT, OF SUCH A RENEWED FRENCH "ENGAGEMENT" ON AFRICAN SOIL, PARTICULARLY SINCE THIS COULD CONCEIVABLY BE PROLONGED. HOWEVER THE ALTERNATIVE OF INACTION WOULD BE EVEN MORE COSTLY, SINCE IT WOULD INEVITABLY INVITE FURTHER POLISARIO PRESSURES ON FRANCE.

6. IF SUCH A DECISION IS TAKEN, SOURCE THOUGHT

THAT GISCARD WOULD FIRST INFORM US AND FRANCE'S OTHER
ALLIES.
HARTMAN

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REVANCHISM, CITIZEN PROTECTION, COMBAT OPERATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 09-Nov-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PARIS32746
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770414-0119
Format: TEL
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771178/aaaacpcv.tel
Line Count: 173
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b0442f1e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 654795
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ELYSEE WEIGHS MILITARY ACTIONS AGAINST POLISARIO IN MAURITANIA SUMMARY: ELYSEE SOURCE TELLS US IN STRICT CONFIDE
TAGS: CASC, MPOL, FR, AL, MO
To: STATE NOUAKCHOTT
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b0442f1e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009